Rt. 8, Frederick, Md. 21701 8/26/74

Doug
Organizing Committee for the Fifth Estate

Dear Doug,

When I dropped in yesterday it was for entirely different purposes than your reaction to what you initiated/which changed the whole thing.

You accused me of "hostility." Think. It was you who became hostiel, first when I said you would have a problem discriminating and more when I said the question was of responsibility. I reacted to what I think can not unreasonably be interpreted as an attack on my integrity and that of my work.

Ordinarily I would ignore such a thing. I have more work than I can do with a longer working day than anyone I know. However, I am older and although those younger frequently misinterpret and sometimes resent it, I feel a sense of responsibility to those who are younger and have not yet had the chance to be subjected to those experiences that come with the accumulation of years.

The reason I write you now is respect for the earlier work of your group. It was impressive, it was responsible, it was socially useful and it deceived nobody.

But all subjects are not the same. Nor have they the same potential. Nor can they have had the same consequences. When I described the JFK assassination as sui generis, nothing else like it, among those considerations I had in mind is its consequences. You do not lack self-confidence and you may believe you perceive and understand them all. But ask yourself suppose you do not. Suppose those analytical powers of which you are so proud load you astray? If those consequences and potential are other than you may conceive them and if they are as I evaluate them instead, do you really want to be taking to the people what has credence and proof only because it is your firm belief?

With all you can do? Where you have done so well? You have been bitten by the bug t o which nona has been immune and don't recognize the fever.

I did not chose to spend the few minute I had to wait for Jim arguing personalities with you. But since you went into this, in the sense that you know and I don't, I'll restirct my comments to a few. The only one outside the JFK and King assassinations, those Popkinx says were against Nixon. He may have only ohhers in mind but two of which I know were such transparent fakes I laid out the entire scenario on one as soon as there was the first report of it. These two were contrived for Nixon's public relations and his emotional needs.

Turner: he is not only a former professional thief he is a practising literary theif as I can lay out for you in two of his books and at least one Ramparts piece. The Garrison disaster was nothing to what it would have been if I had not broken up two Turner Department of Disinformation operations. I blundered into a third that another broke up on Garrison's invitation and a fourth which which Turner had no connection of which I know. Plus those that are public. In one of these Turner deals he fed SDECE disinformation directly to Garrison and through the most dubious intermediary. It was, aside from all its others, the largest single drain on Garrison's resources. You can call my bluff any time you want. Turner won't to my face. Bud was in New Orleans for one of these because I had him go with me. He saw the while thing, couldn't face it because of his liking for both Garrison and Turner, and preserved his trust in Turner despite it. If Turner has done something of worth with Bremer, it is the first good thing he had done on any assassination. With his training and experience I have to ask myself about this earlier record and despite your assurances, wonder about this.

One of the consequences of all this self-important conjecturing most of which is insane is to destroy all credibility. Turner then waits until Wallace has sounded off to look into Brener and didn't before then? I ask myself why because there has been no other work of his that appeared in this long interval.

All this paranoid stuff, which is all that gets attention, serves to do more than destroy public credibility. It means that whatever hits an editor's desk he regards as just as sick. And it provides what your experience should make you aware of, the kind of pat stuff that can be flashed impressively and effectively where it really counts.

Why else do you think nobody in Congress got interested in the JFK assassination at that time and until now? There were minor exceptions, like Ted Kupferman, who got nowhere and quit.

What is remarkable, as Jim tried to lay out to you yesterday in response to your reasonable question about Livingston, is the timing of this crap. It always comes when a development that could have constructive results impends. This is so consistent that I can't dismiss it as mere coincidence, just the hatching of the nuts. It is more than consistent. There is no exception, it always happened, one way or another, every time there was the possibility of something worthwhile happening.

With you, and I intend no offense, discrimination has to begin with distinguishing between loud and repetitious noise and real work. If you think your judgement alone provides the basis, you are going to wind up not at all proud.

When you get into what you call "theories of the assassination" you can't avoid doing the spooks' dirty work for them, as in the end you will realize. The two you mentioned who know what can be credited, Vic and Fletch, have no specific knowledge of the JFK assassination. I know them all. I don't know Jon Newhall well, but I suspect he may have a different reason for holding back, his own education as he learns. He has phoned me a couple of times and I have suggested how he can do his own testing. If you have anything you tell yourself any of the others you mentioned are really expert on either the JFK or the King assassination you are going to wind up with a shaken opinion of your own judgement.

Shoemaking is a very respectable trade. The smart shoemakers sticks to his lasts. The people sure need the kinds of shoes you have turned out in the past. I hope you avoid others in the future.

Sincerely,

Harold Weisberg